HARDING B17(317)

To Miſs W********n.

FORBEAR, raſh Maid, no more invoke the Muſe,
To give thee Talents that thou may'ſt Abuſe;
A *Virgin's* Lines ſhould *innocently* roll,
And be as *True* as *Needle* to the Pole;
Without *ill Language* thou'd they glide along,
Diffuſing *Good* to *all* they fall among;
No Thought that's bad, thou'd harbour in your Breaſt,
Shou'd even out of *Good* ones, chuſe the *Beſt*.
If Friends ſhou'd Differ, or in Errors ſtray,
Or in the Maze of *Party* loſe their Way;
Let not thy Heart condemn; but Pity move,
And hide their Faults with an unbounded Love.
Not V——n, ſtile the man, you ſcarcely know,
Becauſe your F——r pleas'd to call him ſo;
Your F——r's Spirit loves to bear the Sway,
And like, a *Headſtrong Horſe*, muſt have his Way;
Bad Words to him are common as his Talk,
And *Black Scurrility*, his only Walk,
Detraction is the Goddeſs he implores,
And on the Wings of *Infamy* he ſoars
In queſt of pray; no Matter how it's caught:
If *innocent* he feeds, for ſo he's taught;
H–ll and the *D—l*, him all Pleaſure yields,
And are to him as uſeful as his meals;
His Heart's ſo callous, good Advice is vain:
He Sins,—Repents;—Repents to Sin again;
But do not thou, fair Maid, his Precepts learn,
If Fame ſays true, you've *Senſe* for to Diſcern;
Such Words ſhou'd never flow from *Woman's* Hand,
For *Vice* is ſhock'd, when *Virtue's* at a Stand;
Therefore forbear; take up the Pen no more,
But let the *Two* engage, as heretofore;
The *Father* gave the Challenge; let him *Fight*
And not employ a *Daughter* for to write;
His Cauſe is *bad*;—its true he's ſore *afraid*
So calls a *Woman* to implore her Aid;
Help me, he cries, for *J——s* will me Devour,
I find myſelf grow *weaker* ev'ry Hour;
He tells ſuch *Truth* I *bluſh* to contradict,
My Conſcience, if *I've any*'s ſorely prick't,
But as my Honour's ſtak'd, I muſt proceed,
And make the *Harmleſs* with the *Guilty* bleed.
If this wont gain the Field, I'll write no more,
But leave J——s CONQ'ROR as I've done before.

A BYE STANDER.

Coventry Nov. 29, 1777.